



GUIDE | CEMETERIES & CREMATORIA NSW

# Advisory guide to terms and references for the interment sector

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# Glossary of terms

This guide provides definitions and explanations for terms and references commonly used in the interment sector in NSW. The list is provided in alphabetical order and includes references and terms from the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013* and the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2014* and other sources such as the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

**Table 1. Glossary of terms used in the interment sector**

Term	Explanation
<b>Aboriginal remains</b>	<p>the whole or part of the bodily remains of an Aboriginal, but does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a body or the remains of a body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) buried in accordance with the law of a state or territory; or</li> <li>(ii) buried in land that is, in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, used or recognized as a burial ground;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) an object made from human hair or from any other bodily material that is not readily recognizable as being bodily material; or</li> <li>(c) a body or the remains of a body dealt with or to be dealt with in accordance with a law of a state or territory relating to medical treatment or post-mortem examinations.</li> </ul> <p>(Refer to <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Heritage Protection Act 1984</i>)</p>
<b>Aboriginal Sites Register of NSW</b>	<p>the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) maintained by NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) information about Aboriginal objects that have been reported to the Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>(b) information about Aboriginal Places that have been declared by the Minister for the Environment to have special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture</li> </ul>
<b>Allotment</b>	a term for an unused grave, or a site for ashes interment
<b>Authorised officer</b>	a person appointed as an authorised officer under section 125 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>
<b>Aquamation</b>	a form of bio-cremation in which the body is dissolved through a liquid process called alkaline hydrolysis
<b>At need</b>	an ash or burial site for immediate use
<b>Bodily remains</b>	the whole or any part of the body of a person who has died (whatever its physical state may be), but does not include the whole or any part of a body that has been cremated – see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>
<b>Burial</b>	placing a casket or coffin into an earth grave or a vault (also known as ‘interment’)
<b>Burial licence</b>	a previously used term to describe an interment right (see below), a licence granted by a cemetery operator conferred an exclusive right to bury the remains of one or more persons in a burial place.
<b>Burial place</b>	a grave site, set aside for the purpose of interment of bodily remains vault site, crypt site or other place for the disposition of the remains of the dead
<b>Casket</b>	a rectangular container for the body of the deceased. A casket can be made of wood or metal

Term	Explanation
<b>Cemeteries and crematoria register</b>	the register kept by Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW in accordance with section 27 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> that records the name and location of each cemetery and crematoria, the name and address/location of each operator, the telephone number of each operator, any other information required by the regulations
<b>Cemetery</b>	<p>a building or place used primarily for the interment and memorialisation of human remains (whether or not it contains an associated building for conducting memorial services), but does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an Aboriginal place, or land reserved as a historic site, within the meaning of the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i></li> <li>(b) a place where cremated remains are scattered but is not otherwise used for the disposal of human remains</li> <li>(c) a place on private land, where the area of the landholding is five hectares or more and the location has been approved by a local government authority for the purposes of placing a body in a grave or vault</li> <li>(d) any other place, or place of a class, prescribed by the regulations</li> </ul>
	Cemetery as defined includes the following places:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a reserve or part of a reserve dedicated or reserved as a public cemetery under the <i>Crown Lands Management Act 2016</i></li> <li>(b) a private cemetery or other place approved for that purpose by a local government authority</li> <li>(c) land reserved (otherwise than as a historic site) under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> or acquired under Part 11 of that Act, where the location has been approved for that purpose by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a person or body (including a local council, trust board or board of management within the meaning of that Act) in which the care, control and management of the land is vested</li> <li>(ii) if no such person or body has been vested with the care, control and management of the land—the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	See Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>
<b>Cemetery operator's register</b>	a register kept by a cemetery operator (or crematoria operator where applicable) in accordance with section 63 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> that records the following activities conducted by the operator after 25 June 2018:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interment rights granted</li> <li>• memorials erected in respect of interment sites</li> <li>• interments carried out</li> <li>• cremations carried out</li> <li>• disturbances/removal of remains (see regulation 14 of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2014)</li> </ul>
<b>Chapel</b>	a room at a funeral home or a building where funeral or other services are held
<b>Code of practice</b>	a code approved under section 30 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>
<b>Coffin (also see Casket)</b>	a body-shaped container for the body of the deceased, usually made of wood
<b>Columbarium</b>	a sepulchral vault or other structure with tiers of recesses (or niches) in the walls to receive the ashes of the dead
<b>Columbarium wall</b>	a free-standing wall in a cemetery with niches or plaques for the placement of ashes

Term	Explanation
<b>Consecrated</b>	dedicated for a religious purpose
<b>Cremation</b>	a process for the reduction of bodily remains by fire or heat, alkaline hydrolysis (see 'aquamation') or by other means prescribed by the regulations—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Crematorium</b>	a building in which deceased persons are cremated (whether or not it contains an associated building for conducting memorial services), including premises where bodily remains are disposed of by alkaline hydrolysis—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Cremated remains</b>	human ashes
<b>Crown cemetery</b>	managed land, or part of Crown-managed land, dedicated, reserved or used (whether before or after the commencement of this definition) for the purposes of a public cemetery or crematorium (or both) under the <i>Crown Lands Management Act 2016</i> —see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Crypt</b>	a structure (chamber or vault) above or below ground that is technically a mausoleum used to house a number of interments, either of the same family or at least the same denomination
<b>Desk</b>	a block of stone or concrete with a sloping front face
<b>Exhumation</b>	the removal of a dead person's remains (not cremated remains) from a grave or a vault, but does not include their removal from one vault for immediate transfer to another vault in the same cemetery or their temporary removal for the purposes of reburial in the same grave or vault
<b>Fabric</b>	all the physical material of a place
<b>Footstone</b>	small slab of stone placed at the foot of a grave, often with initials
<b>Funeral director</b>	a provider of services including some or all of the following: collection of the body of the deceased; provision of a choice of coffins, caskets and arranging for the deceased to be viewed, by appointment; contacting the cemetery or crematorium and arranging the date and time of the funeral; ensuring all forms are correctly completed and any necessary forms/certificates delivered to the cemetery/crematorium office; payment of the various fees involved, called disbursements, that include cemetery/crematorium fees, minister's or celebrant's fees; completion of registration of death with Births, Deaths and Marriages <b>(Note: this is the commonly defined understanding of the role. The Act has a short non descriptive definition)</b>
<b>Funeral fund</b>	for the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> , it has the meaning it has under the <i>Funeral Funds Act 1979</i> , which is; a funeral contribution fund or a pre-paid funeral fund—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Gardenesque</b>	a landscape design style characterised by garden-like open spaces and often 'curvilinear' paths and plantings
<b>Grave</b>	the site in the cemetery where the coffin/casket containing the deceased will be or has been placed
<b>Grave furniture</b>	ornamental items that are supplementary to the principal memorial on grave plots such as urns, vases and grave surrounds
<b>Grave infill</b>	the covering to the earth within grave kerbing

Term	Explanation
<b>Grave marker</b>	any object used to mark a grave site such as plaques, signs, rocks, timber crosses and monuments
<b>Headstone</b>	a marker that lies at the head of the grave that names the person/people interred in the allotment/grave
<b>Holder of an interment right</b>	the person recorded in the cemetery operator's register in relation to that cemetery as the holder of the interment right
<b>Human remains</b>	bodily remains and includes:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the remains of a stillborn child</li> <li>(b) bodily remains after they have been cremated—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Immortelles</b>	funeral ornaments, usually in the form of a floral wreath or posy, made of ceramic or metal
<b>Inurnment</b>	the placement of cremated remains in an urn, after which the urn is placed into a niche or other resting location
<b>Inscription</b>	commonly used for text inscribed on headstones or plaques
<b>Interment</b>	of human remains, refers to placement of human remains in a mausoleum, vault, columbarium or other structure designed for the placement of such remains; or the burial in the earth of human remains (directly in the earth or in a container)—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Interment industry</b>	being cemetery operators, funeral directors, funeral funds and any other persons or class of persons prescribed by the regulations—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Interment matter</b>	<p>any matter relating to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) burials, exhumations and cremations</li> <li>(b) the operation of cemeteries and crematoria</li> <li>(c) the design, construction and maintenance of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. buildings, memorials, mausoleums, vaults and other structures and things in cemeteries and crematoria</li> <li>ii. walls, fences, paths, drains and other works of cemeteries and crematoria</li> </ul> </li> <li>(d) responsibility for the maintenance of structures and things walls, fences, paths, drains and other works of cemeteries and crematoria</li> <li>(e) the equipment used in cemeteries and crematoria, including its maintenance</li> <li>(f) the grounds of cemeteries and crematoria, including their maintenance</li> <li>(g) the position, depth and maintenance of graves</li> <li>(h) the construction of coffins to be placed in vaults</li> <li>(i) interment and other rights in relation to cemeteries and crematoria</li> <li>(j) the making and keeping of records about cemeteries and crematoria, including records of burials, exhumations and cremations and burial and other rights in relation to cemeteries and crematoria</li> <li>(k) the inspection of cemeteries and crematoria and their records</li> </ul>
<b>Interment right</b>	<p>See Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>.</p> <p>an interment right granted under section 44 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>.</p>

Term	Explanation
<b>Interment service</b>	any service (other than the supply of goods) provided with respect to the interment of human remains—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Interment site</b>	a place in a cemetery for the interment of human remains, as per section 44 of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> —see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Kerb/kerbing</b>	the stone or concrete surround enclosing a burial allotment
<b>Ledger/ledger slab</b>	a rigid solid covering generally of stone lying either on top or within the monument kerbing
<b>Lift and deepen</b>	a process of opening an interment site, recovering any human remains interred, deepening or otherwise enlarging the interment site, re-interring the existing human remains in the place of interment, so as to provide space for additional interments in the site
<b>Maintenance</b>	of a cemetery, crematorium, structure or thing includes alteration, removal, renewal, relocation and repair of the cemetery, crematorium, structure or thing—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Mausoleum</b>	a structure erected and designed to entomb coffins, caskets, etc. above ground and as a resting place for human remains without the burial of the remains in the earth. It does not include a structure designed as a resting place exclusively for cremated human remains—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Memorial</b>	<p>(see Monument) means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a gravestone, plaque, cenotaph or other monument</li> <li>(b) any other structure or permanent physical object used to memorialise a deceased person</li> </ul> <p>See Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>.</p>
<b>Memorial garden</b>	an area within a cemetery or crematorium consisting of landscape features, walls, pathways, decorative gardens for the interment and/or memorialisation of cremated remains
<b>Monument</b>	a marker that lies on or beside a grave that names the occupant/s of the grave
<b>Mortise</b>	the slot in the top of the plinth (base stone) into which the headstone tenon fits
<b>Mortuary</b>	premises that are used, or intended to be used, for the preparation or storage of bodies as part of the arrangements for their burial or cremation, but does not include any premises (such as a hospital) in which bodies may be temporarily stored pending their transfer to a mortuary
<b>Natural burial</b>	<p>of human remains means burial in the ground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) without preparation of the remains using chemical preservatives and by containment of the remains only in a shroud or biodegradable coffin</li> <li>(b) with no memorialisation on the interment site</li> </ul> <p>See Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i>.</p>
<b>Necropolis</b>	a 'city of the dead' or a large cemetery
<b>Niche</b>	a space in a columbarium, mausoleum or niche wall to hold an urn
<b>Niche wall</b>	a specially designed wall where ashes of the deceased are placed and a memorial plaque with inscription is installed on the wall

Term	Explanation
<b>Operator</b>	<p>of a cemetery and <b>cemetery operator</b> means the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) for a Crown cemetery or crematorium—the Crown cemetery operator</li> <li>(b) for a cemetery or crematorium administered by a council having control under section 48 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>—the council</li> <li>(c) in any other case—the person or body for the time being responsible for the management of the cemetery or crematorium</li> </ul>
<b>Out of coffin</b>	expression for when the body of the deceased is laid directly on earth and not in a casket
<b>Perpetual care</b>	fulfilling the perpetual care obligation refers to the cemetery operator caring for the grounds, providing access to resting places, protecting and maintaining the cemetery's perimeter, making various capital improvements to existing structures, water systems and driveways as required
<b>Pre-need</b>	ash or burial site to be used at a future date
<b>Private burial</b>	placing human remains in a grave or vault located on private land where the area of landholding is five hectares or more and the location has been approved for that purpose by a local government authority or on other private land prescribed by the regulations—see Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> .
<b>Renewal scheme</b>	a scheme for the renewal of graves that had already been previously used for interments, for example a portion of the cemetery that has been used for burials to enable further burial places to be located in that portion—see Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2014
<b>Renewable interment right</b>	<p>the right for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the interment of human remains of the person or persons to whom the right relates after they have been cremated (cremated remains) for an initial term of up to 99 years commencing on the day it is granted</li> <li>(b) for the interment of human remains (other than cremated remains) of the person or persons for an initial term of 25 years commencing on the day it is granted</li> </ul> <p>See section 54 and Dictionary of the <i>Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013</i> and regulation 8 of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2014</p>
<b>Stele</b>	a vertical slab marker such as a typical headstone
<b>Tablet</b>	a thin stone slab attached to a monument, typically with memorial inscription
<b>Tenon</b>	the tongue on the bottom of a headstone, to fit into the mortise (slab) in the base
<b>Tomb</b>	may refer to a crypt or underground vault or a monument above a grave or vault
<b>Transcription</b>	a written record of all or part of the inscription on a monument, or a collection of such records for a whole cemetery
<b>Urn</b>	a container for holding the cremated remains (ashes) of the deceased
<b>Vault</b>	a small building or chamber for the housing of casket(s), which may be above ground or partly underground

# Further information

Any queries in regard to this guide should be directed to:

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Website: [industry.nsw.gov.au/ccnsw](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/ccnsw)

# References

Information for this guide has been drawn from a number of sources, as listed below:

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Heritage Protection Act 1984*

*Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 (NSW)*

*Crown Lands Management Act 2016 (NSW)*

*Funeral Funds Act 1979 (NSW)*

*Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)*

*Public Health Regulation 2012 (NSW)*

*National Trust of Australia (NSW) 2008, Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation*

*NSW Fair Trading*

